

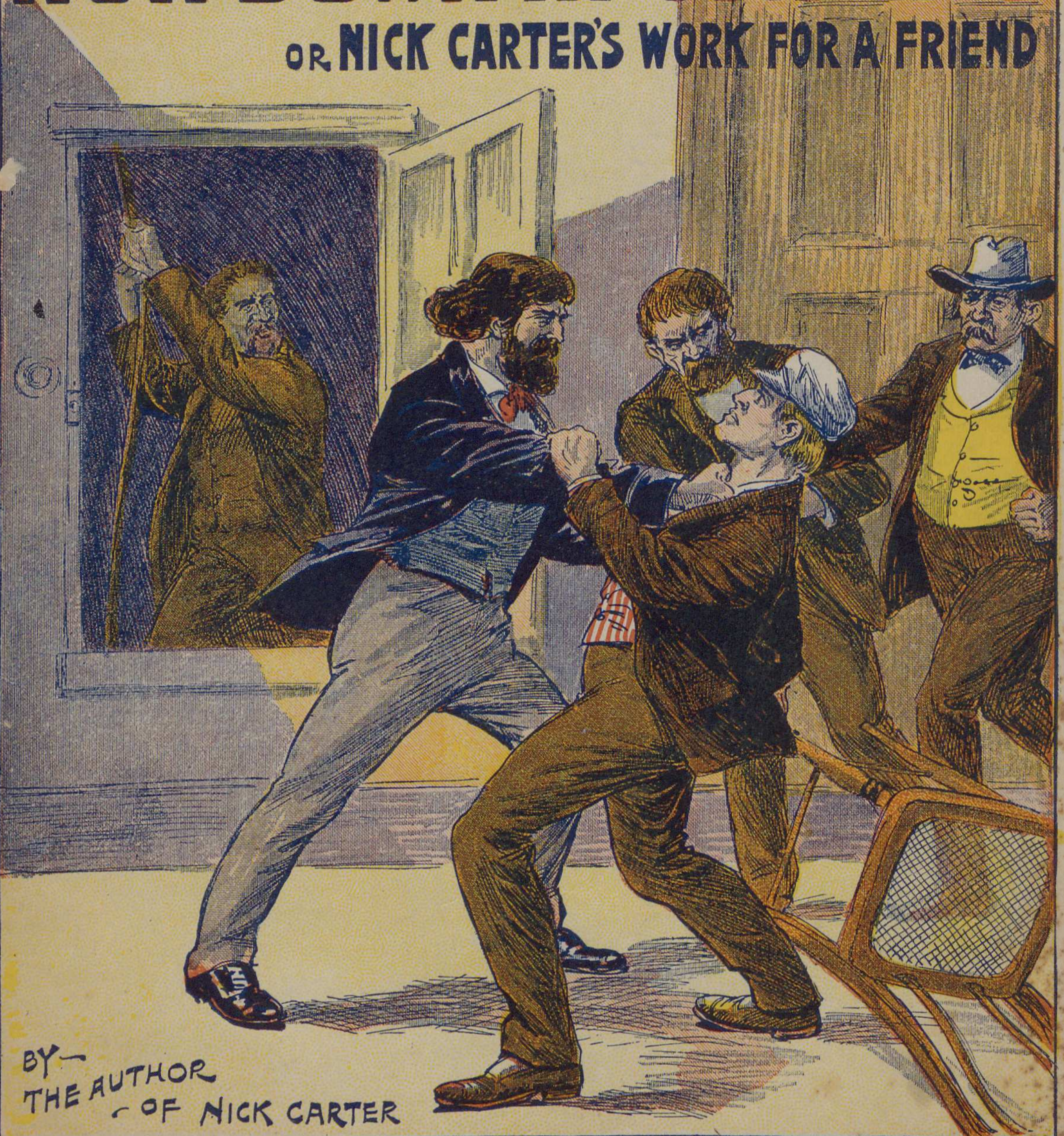
NICK CARTER WEEKLY

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RUN DOWN IN TORONTO OR NICK CARTER'S WORK FOR A FRIEND



THE THREE REMAINING MEN POUNCED UPON NICK AND BORE HIM TO THE FLOOR.

NICK CARTER WEEKLY.

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Run Down in Toronto;

OR,

NICK CARTER'S WORK FOR A FRIEND.

By the Author of "NICK CARTER."

CHAPTER I.

NICK DISCOVERS A FRAUD.

"Where bound, Nick?"

"I'm going over to Guswein's place, Chick," replied Nick Carter, the great detective. "I want him to get me up a few new wigs and beards."

"I thought you would need some new things after that tussle with the green-goods men," went on Chick, with a laugh. "By Jove, but our fights with that gang were rough ones."

"Well, my stock of disguises has been running down lately. I have not had time to replenish it, I've been so busy. And now I'm going to take time to do what ought to have been done long ago," concluded Nick.

It was a fine morning in early May when he started on foot for the somewhat private establishment of Carl Guswein, maker of wigs, false beards, etc., for the detective trade and theatrical profession.

Nick had known Guswein for years, and the two were warm friends. Guswein admired the great detective greatly, and on more than one occasion had spent whole days in getting up wigs and other things strictly according to Nick's minute directions.

"He vos der most barticular man I efer saw," Guswein would declare. "But ven der vig vos done, it vos look like nature had made it, an' not Carl Guswein at all, alretty!"

Guswein's establishment was situated on the second floor of a large building on East Fourteenth street.

When Nick arrived there he found the round-faced German in earnest conversation with another German, a small man, with a florid face, light hair and bad, shifting eyes, which made the great detective suspicious of him on the instant.

"If he wants a disguise, he wants it for no good purpose," thought Nick.

"Ah, how you vos, Mr. C.!" exclaimed Guswein, as he nodded, pleasantly to Nick.

He never mentioned his customers by their names in the presence of others.

"How are you, Guswein," returned Nick.

"I vill pe vid you in chust von minute, sir," went on the wig maker.

Nick nodded again, and the German turned once more to speak to the little man with the bad, shifting eyes.

The two conversed in German, and in such low tones that although Nick could understand the language very well, he failed to catch more than a few stray words such as "bonds," "best chance," "I do it for you only as a friend," and so on.

Presently the two moved over to where Guswein had his large safe. The wig maker brought out a tin box and took from it a package of bank bills. He counted them over carefully and then passed them to the stranger, who, after pocketing them, gave half a dozen engraved documents to Guswein in return.

"Now dot is done," said the wig maker, with a smile.

"Yes, Carl, and you will never live to regret it," replied the little man. "I will see you about those other bonds in three or four days."

"Dot's goot!"

The two shook hands, and a moment later the little man with the bad, shifting eyes passed Nick and left the place, doing so with swift and totally noiseless steps.

"Now, vos is id, Mr. Carter?" asked Guswein, after the two were closeted in the wig maker's private workshop.

"I want you to make me up a number of things, Guswein."

And bringing out a paper containing a list of the articles desired, Nick went over it carefully, explaining every detail.

This took the best part of an hour, and

then Guswein said he understood perfectly just what was wanted.

"I vill go to vork dis very day on dem dings," he said.

"And you will have them inside of a week?"

"Sure. Vork vos slack, you know."

"That's so—excepting in my line of work," and Nick laughed.

"You vos so busy as efer, eh?" returned Guswein. "Vell, vy not? You vos der greatest detective vot der world haf efer seen alretty, and dot's der truth."

"By the way, who is that man you were talking to when I came in?" asked Nick.

"Dot ist Frederick Bauermann, a friend of mine, Mr. Carter. He vos a very fine fellow, I can tell you!"

"Indeed?"

"He ist an agent for der Austrian Government, and he chust sold me some Austrian ponds by der lowest brice vos you efer see."

"What kind of bonds?"

"Der special issue for dis year. Da vos vort in der regular market a hundred cents on der dollar, but he let me haf dem for ninety-four cents. Dot's putty goot, eh?"

"It ought to be," replied the great detective. "How many of the bonds did you buy?"

"I dake me four thousand dollars' vorth. You see, I vos chust got some money from mine fader's estate in Chermany last veek. Bauermann knowed about dot, and so he come around and told me apoudt dem ponds."

"Will you let me see them?"

"Sure. Say, if you vonts some of dem ponds, Mr. Carter, I vos speak to Bauermann apout dem."

"All right, Guswein. By the way, how long have you known your friend?"

"Oh, not very long. I got acquainted mit

him at der Germania pall last vinter. I dell you he vos a fine feller. He told me he knowed mine mudder in Chermany and he set 'em up a goot many time. You ought to know him."

"Yes, I would like to know him," returned Nick, dryly.

Guswein had put the engraved documents in his safe, but now he brought them out for examination.

Nick looked the so-styled bonds over carefully. As far as appearances went, they looked genuine.

Yet Nick could not bring himself to believe that they were all right. He was a good judge of character by the face, and he had already set Frederick Bauermann down as a rogue.

"Vot you dinks of dem?" asked Guswein.

"You ought to make money on this deal, Guswein," was the detective's slow reply. "But don't you think you might get the bonds for even less?"

"No, no! Vy, Bauermann showed me a slip from a Berlin baber vot said der bonds vos vorth dere veight in gold alretty!"

"I see. Well, then, you have a fine investment."

At that instant the bell on the outer door rang, indicating that some one had entered the main room beyond.

"Oxcuse me a minute, Mr. Carter," said Guswein, and hurried out.

A sudden idea flashed across Nick's mind.

"I'll do it for Guswein. He is a good-hearted old chap, and I don't want to see him swindled," he said to himself.

In one of his pockets Nick carried a very small but powerful camera, in perfect order for taking pictures.

Straightening out one of the bonds on the wall, he fastened it by a few thumb tacks.

Then he brought his camera into play, and in thirty seconds had two snap shots of the document in his little pocket machine.

After this he placed the document among the others and put his camera out of sight.

In a few minutes Guswein came back.

"Here are your bonds, Guswein," said Nick. "Better put them in the safe again, before they get lost."

"Dot's so, Mr. Carter. I vos a poor man und gan't afford to lose me much."

"When do you expect to see Frederick Bauermann again?"

"I said somedings apout some ponds for a friend, and he said he vould see me apout dem in dree or four days."

"Oh, all right. Well, if he comes in, ask him to stay and send word for me."

"I vill, Mr. Carter."

With this understanding, the two separated, and Nick at once left the building.

Out on the street he called a cab and was driven to the office.

Here he spent some little time in developing the pictures he had taken.

When they were "fastened" on the plates, he armed himself with a powerful microscope and then set off for down town.

He was bound for the office of the Austrian consul on lower Broadway.

When he arrived there, he found he had to wait all of an hour before he could see the dignitary, despite the fact that he sent in his professional card and stated he was in a hurry.

"By thunder, but I could see the President quicker," he muttered to himself. "But with these foreigners it's all style and front, and everything has got to move just so slow for appearance's sake."

But at last Nick found himself closeted with Mr. Ollendorff, the consul's chief clerk. He found the young Austrian very agreeable and willing to give any information in his power.

"I wish to find out about certain Austrian bonds," said Nick.

"What of them?"

"I have two photographs of bonds here. Will you tell me if they are as valuable as represented?"

As Nick spoke he brought out the two negatives, and after arranging them in the light properly, handed Ollendorff the microscope.

The consul's clerk was now thoroughly interested. For fully five minutes he bent over the negatives, examining them with the utmost care.

"Well?" ventured Nick.

"These so-called bonds are utterly worthless, Mr. Carter!" cried the clerk, at last.

"Forgeries?"

"No, not forgeries, in the true sense of the word, but bonds gotten up to represent no particular issue of real government paper."

"I see what you mean. There never was even such a series as this?"

"Exactly. The man who put such paper out is a swindler."

"So I thought."

"May I ask how you procured these negatives?"

"I took them with my pocket-camera."

"Ah! then you saw the so-called bonds?"

"I did. A friend of mine has purchased four thousand dollars' worth."

The young Austrian held up his hands in horror.

"Impossible!"

"It's the truth."

"And the swindler?"

"Is a man named Frederick Bauermann."

At the mention of that name a new light shone in the eyes of the consul's clerk.

"That explains it. So Bauermann has reached New York at last!"

"Then he is known?"

"Only too well, my dear sir. He has operated in Milwaukee, St. Louis and half a

dozen other Western cities which have a large foreign population."

"What, under the same name?"

"Under that name and under half a dozen others. He is a slick Berlin swindler who came over about two years ago."

"And have you done nothing to run him down?"

"We have tried to get him a dozen times, but just at the last moment he would slip through our fingers."

"Well, he won't slip through my fingers," muttered Nick, with a sudden determination.

"Good! Then you will run him down for us?"

"I will run him down, yes; but not particularly for your government. I will do the work for my friend."

CHAPTER II.

SHOWING WHAT A LITTLE MAN CAN DO AND A BIG MAN CAN'T.

"You mean the man who was swindled out of four thousand dollars?" questioned the consul's clerk, after a pause.

"Yes."

"May I ask his name, Mr. Carter?"

"I would prefer not to mention it."

"And why?"

"Well, the thought has just struck me that I may run down this Bauermann without my friend knowing it."

"I see."

"As yet my friend has no idea that he has been swindled. There is no reason why he should be worried by knowing. I will undertake to run the swindler down and then let my friend know the true state of affairs."

The consul's clerk at once saw through Nick's scheme, and he smiled broadly.

"You will do him a good turn behind his back, eh?"

"Yes. Besides, I may have an easier time

of it than if my friend knew of the swindle. He might do something that would give Bauermann a clew, and the swindler would at once skip."

"There is a good deal in that, sir."

"If you will, I wish you would tell me all you can about Bauermann," went on Nick.

The consul's clerk willingly complied. The conversation lasted half an hour, and at the conclusion Nick knew all that was necessary, and more.

It was not long before Nick was back in his office. Here he met Chick again, and to his chief assistant related the particulars of the case on hand.

"You must take charge of all the other matters," he said. "At present, for Guswein's sake, Bauermann, and no one else, is my game."

After this, the great detective spent some time in donning a disguise. When he again appeared he looked like a broken-down German musician.

He wore a faded blue suit and a squatty cap, broad and well-worn shoes, and in his hand carried a rusty-looking flute case, containing an old Meyer-model flute.

"Say, poss, does you know vere a fine flute blayer can git a chop alretty?" he asked Chick, who was engaged in writing a letter.

"A job? No, don't bother me!" growled Chick, as he glanced up. Then he gave a second look. "Nick?"

"Correct, my boy. How is it?"

"Perfect, as usual. But what if you are called on to play?"

"Play? Listen!"

And taking out the flute, Nick put it together, and in a twinkling was laboring away vigorously at "After the Ball."

"That's enough! That's enough, old man! Play another bar and I'll fire the inkwell at you. That's bad enough for any gutter band."

"Then it's a go all the way through?"

"It is."

"That's all I wanted to know. Now to scrape an acquaintance with Frederick Bauermann."

"When will I see you again?"

"I can't say. If I need your help you get word."

Nick's next move was to call on Carl Guswein again. He found the wig maker at work over the wigs he had ordered.

"How do you do?" he said, in German, and then he said he was looking for Frederick Bauermann. "Somebody told me you knew where he lived."

"Yes, I know," returned Guswein, in German, and at once gave Bauermann's address to Nick.

The detective thanked him and went out. He could not help but smile to think how easily he had fooled even the man who had made most of the disguise he wore.

The address given was of a second-rate hotel up the Bowery. Why Bauermann should choose such a resort and still pretend to be rich was a mystery.

"If Guswein wasn't so wrapped up in his business he would see that all couldn't be quite straight," he said to himself. "But being a hard worker and strictly honest, he, no doubt, imagines the world won't ring in any swindle on him."

As rapidly as he could, the great detective covered the distance to the Bismarck House, as the hotel was called, and entered the office, where a stout German sat behind the desk.

"Yah, Mr. Bauermann had a room here, but he is gone now," was the reply, in response to Nick's question.

"And ven he go, please?" asked Nick.

"Not more as two hours ago."

"Did he say vere he go?"

"He said he had hired furnished rooms

on Third avenue and vos going to dake board mit a friend's family."

The hotel keeper had the address on Third avenue and gave it to Nick.

"Ten to one it's a fake," thought Nick, as he left.

He was right. When he reached the place he found that a large candy factory occupied the ground, and nothing had ever been seen or heard of Bauermann.

"That settles it," said Nick to himself. "He is taking no chances. He just stayed here long enough to get Guswein's money and then he lit out. The chances are that he has left New York far behind. It's a pity I didn't arrest him on general principles when I saw Guswein hand him that cash."

But Nick did not lose time in speculating on the subject.

He went back to the Bismarck House and here struck the old woman who kept the apple stand near the front door.

"You vos been here all day?" he began.

"Oi have that, Dutchy," she replied, with a grin.

"You vos vatch der peoples vot go in and out of der hotel?"

"Sometoimes—whin Oi'm not busy countin' me vast wealth."

"I vos a poor mans an' a feller vos schwindle me. I vos vant to cotch him alretty."

"That's roight, Dutchy."

"He left der hotel two, dree hours ago. Did you see him?"

And Nick gave the apple woman a brief but accurate description of Frederick Bauermann.

The old Irishwoman was all sympathy, and listened attentively.

"I seen him—he owes me fer some fruit he bought over a week ago!" she cried. "Whin he went out I wanted to bone him, but he was in too much of a hurry."

"An' vere he go alretty?"

"He skipped down that side street, so he did."

And she pointed to a street which was not far off.

"Mit his drunk?"

"No, he wasn't drunk."

"I vos mean his pox mit clothings?"

"Oh, Oi see! No, he had no box, but he had a big, black leather bag, which was most bustin' open wid t'ings."

"Dank you."

And nodding pleasantly, Nick slouched off toward the side street which had been indicated.

"One thing is certain, he doesn't intend to keep in this neighborhood very long," reasoned Nick.

"He mentioned that place on Third avenue to throw possible pursuers off the scent and give himself more time.

"That shows he knows what a risk he is running and is on his guard.

"I must lose no time in tracing him up, or he'll get clear out of my reach, perhaps, by skipping to Europe or some other foreign shore."

Nick felt certain that Bauermann would not stop in the vicinity, so he passed on down the side street a distance of several blocks.

"Carry yer baggage, boss!"

It was the cry of a well-built boy, addressed to a gentleman who was walking along with a large valise in either hand.

"No! go away, you gutter snipe!" howled the man, who was red in the face and perspiring freely.

"Maybe yer ain't got der pennies ter pay fer havin' 'em carried!" went on the street urchin.

"Git out of my way, or I'll kick you into the gutter!" howled the man.

"All right, old pack-mule. When yer git a nickel come around an' hire me," went on

the boy and ran out of the man's way to escape a blow from one of the heavy valises.

"Say, shtop a minute!" called out Nick to the boy.

"Wot do you want, sauerkraut?" demanded the urchin, coming to a halt.

"I speak mit you, eh?"

"All right, Pumpernickle, fire away."

"Ist dot vot you does for a living—carrying bags?"

"Bet yer life! But say?"

"Vell?"

"Yer can't go ter work on dis beat; see? It belongs ter me an' me brudder."

"I ton't vos carry pags for a living. I vos a musician."

"Ain't I onter yer, old bigfeet. Yer one of dem sauerkrauters wot comes over here ter play 'Down Went McGinty,' 'Grandfather's Clock' an' all der rest of der wormy old chestnuts."

And the boy grinned and kept well out of Nick's way.

"I vos looking for a man vot came dis way two, dree hours ago," went on Nick, calmly. "If you hellup me find him I vos bay you for der droubles."

"Yes, yer will pay—in der horn."

"Sure, mine boy. I vos not fooling."

And Nick held out a small handful of change.

"Gee! yer must have struck a graft lately, sauerkraut!" cried the street urchin. "Don't yer want a pardner?"

"Here vos den cents. Now vill you help me?"

The offer of the money made the boy a friend on the spot. He pocketed the money and looked at Nick inquiringly.

"Did I see dat feller?" he exclaimed, after the detective had described Bauermann: "I just guess I did! I carried his valise; see?"

"You vos sure?"

"O' course I am. He was such a small feller, an' der valise was a whopper—most too big fer me, an' I kin most move a house."

"An' vere you go mid dot man? Show me kvick, an' I vos gif you anodder den cents alretty."

"Come on den, me friend. An' excuse me fer callin' yer sauerkraut an' bigfeet. Dat was only a bit of sport; see?"

"Yah, I see. Nefer mind; poys must haf fun. I likes mine fun so vell as der rest."

The boy ran on ahead, and so swift of foot was he that it was no easy task for Nick to keep up with him.

They journeyed along a distance of a dozen blocks and then passed into a dirty and narrow street but two blocks from the East River.

"I brought him to dis corner," explained the boy. "He said he didn't want me ter go any funder."

"An' where did he go?"

"I was kind er curious an' I watched him. He went into dat house over dere—der one where de front door is open."

"Dank you. Here vos der money."

"Want me ter go in wid yer?"

"No, I vos see him alone. You can go back an' carry some more drunks an' pags alretty."

And with a broad smile from Nick and a grin from the gamin the two separated.

Walking along slowly, as though he had come to the spot for no special purpose, Nick approached the house the boy had pointed out, and ascended the front steps.

As the boy had said, the front door was open, and he walked into the untidy hallway.

He knocked on the first door and was answered by a girl.

"Does Mr. Goebel lif here, miss?" he asked, respectfully.

"No, sir, this is our home, and our names are Martin," was the reply.

"An' who vos lif up stairs, blease?"

"Mrs. Riley is on the next floor—her and her daughter, Julia."

"And der next, blease?"

"There is a new party up there, sir. I think their names are Stollwerck, but I'm not sure, sir."

"Dank you, maybe I better go up an' see."

"Yes, sir."

Up the stairs went Nick.

He felt certain that he was now on the right track.

This was just the place where a man by disguising himself somewhat might spend weeks without the police finding him.

The neighborhood contained many tough and shady characters who for a few dollars would do all in their power to aid Bauermann in keeping out of the clutches of the law.

Arriving at the top floor, Nick knocked sharply on the first door at hand.

"Who's there?" came in a rather uncertain voice.

"I vos looking for Mr. Stollwerck," replied Nick.

"He's out."

"Ven vill he pe pack?"

"I can't say."

"I haf got a backage for him," went on Nick, seeing there was no disposition on the part of the person in the room to unlock the door.

"A package?"

"Yes."

"Who from?"

"I forgot der man's name. He said I vos to leave it at once."

There was a low murmur of voices, and at last the door was cautiously opened.

A man appeared in the opening, a big, burly individual, who looked exactly like

what he was, a foreigner and evidently a socialist or anarchist.

"Where's the package?" he demanded.

"Here in mine pocket," replied Nick, and pushed his way into the room.

He gave one swift glance around, and in the corner, near a door, saw Bauermann standing, an anxious look in his shifting eyes.

"Mine friend Bauermann!" he cried, rushing forward. "I knowed I would soon find you!"

"What do you want of me?" demanded the bond swindler.

"Ton't you remember me?" went on Nick. "I vos from Milwaukee."

"No, I don't remember you. What do you want?"

"Come down stairs and talk mit me."

"Where's that bundle?" demanded the burly man at the door.

"Dot's all right. Come on, Bauermann," answered Nick.

And he caught hold of the swindler's arm.

"It ain't all right!" howled the burly man. "There is something wrong here."

"I don't go down with you," put in Bauermann. "Pester, shut that door again."

"Pester, leave that door open!"

And Nick Carter shoved the flute case in his pocket and drew a pistol.

"Du meine zeit!" howled Pester. "Vot does dis mean?"

"It means your game is up. Bauermann, you are my prisoner."

"A detective!" yelled Bauermann, as he sprang toward the door of the next room, which opened at that instant, and two other men confronted Nick, both powerful-looking fellows.

Pester closed and locked the door.

"We don't allow detectives in here," growled one of the newcomers. "We have no use for them."

Nick at once realized that he had dropped into an anarchists' den.

Confident that he could handle the whole crowd, he had only for a moment taken his eye off the little swindler, who had succeeded, however, while Nick's attention was attracted by the entrance of the newcomers, in crowding himself into a dumb waiter that ran from a corner closet to the cellar.

He now leaped forward to catch the fellow, but was too late.

Down went the elevator with a rush, and with it disappeared the very man of the whole crowd Nick was after.

A second later and the three remaining men pounced upon the great detective and bore him to the floor.

CHAPTER III.

ONE AGAINST THREE.

"He's a detective!"

"He has come here to report our doings to the police!"

"Down with the sneak!"

These and a dozen other cries came from the lips of the trio who had hurled themselves upon Nick.

They did not know he was after Bauermann solely and cared not a rap just then for what plotting they might be doing.

He knew they rarely had the courage to carry out any of their awful plans for bringing the whole world to a level.

The knowledge that they were three to one gave the anarchists courage, and they went at Nick as if they expected to beat out his life then and there with their fists and boots.

But the great detective did not stand this for long. He was on his mettle in less than half a minute, and then the way he walked into the crowd filled them with amazement and terror.

Biff! bang! First one fellow caught it on

the jaw, and then the second got a crack in the eye that made him see more stars than are out of a clear night.

"Mine gracious!"

"Mine eye vos knocked owit!"

The third man, seeing the fate of his companions, tried to dodge out of the way.

But it was too late. Flinging the others aside, Nick leaped in front of him, and then and there that anarchist lost two of his biggest front teeth.

With a crash, he went staggering up against the wall and then fell down all in a heap.

"Now have you fellows got enough?" demanded Nick, who was still as cool as a cucumber.

"Don't—don't kill me!" spluttered the chap who had lost the teeth.

"I say, have you all got enough?"

There was no reply at this. But the anarchists were cowed, and they showed it very plainly.

"Now all of you stay there till I get back," went on Nick. "If I catch you trying to escape, I'll serve you worse than I have."

With these words, the great detective ran out of the room and down the two flights of stairs with all possible speed.

In the lower hallway he found the door leading to the cellar steps locked. But this was speedily burst open, and into the dark and foul-smelling hole he descended.

The little windows the place contained were thick with cobwebs and coal dust, and consequently the place was almost totally black. Nick had hardly taken three steps before he went into a pool of rank sewage water up to his ankle.

As he came to a halt, he heard a slight noise in the extreme rear of the cellar.

He was provided with his pocket lamp, and now took time to bring it out and turn it on.

The long flash of light moved over the rough stone foundation of the house and toward the rear.

Then for less than two seconds it fell upon the form of Frederick Bauermann, just as the man was in the act of crawling through a narrow window, the iron bars of which had been broken out.

"Stop!" called Nick, but the swindler paid no attention, and soon disappeared in the back yard.

Making his way around the pool of sewage water, Nick gained the window. The lantern was put away once more, and soon he stood in the little yard beyond.

Bauermann had disappeared.

There were several directions in which he might have gone, and Nick was compelled to pause to study the situation.

Yet not for long. Wet and dirty footmarks led to a fence which separated the yard from that of the house on the next street. Bauermann had scaled this fence, and the detective lost no time in following.

Nick landed in the midst of a crowd of children who were playing at circus. They had been frightened at Bauermann's sudden appearance, and now they became more startled than ever.

"Where did that other man go?" asked the detective.

"Trough der hall to der street, mister," replied one of the little girls.

"Up or down the street?"

"He jumped on McSorley's grocery wagon," replied another girl.

"Thank you," and to prevent the children from following him, Nick cast a handful of small change on the ground, over which they fought like a flock of geese over a measure of corn.

Once on the street, Nick beheld an old man sitting on a near-by stoop, smoking a short clay pipe.

"Did you see McSorley's grocery wagon around here?" he asked.

"Oi did thot," was the slow reply.

"A man just jumped in, didn't he?"

"Yis."

"Which way did he drive?"

"Up that way."

"Was he alone?"

"Yis."

Nick waited to hear no more.

"Bauermann is game, and if there is such a thing as making an escape, he intends to do it.

"He knows now that I am on his track, and he will do his level best to keep out of my way."

Nick started on a run up the street.

At the corner he saw a butcher's cart tied to a post.

The butcher boy was just taking a basket of meat into a saloon.

"Hi, there, my friend!" called out Nick. The boy stopped.

"Wot yer want?"

"Do you want to earn a dollar in ten minutes?"

"None of yer fly jokes, Dutchy!"

"I means it, my poy. Here is der dollar."

"Wot do yer wants me ter do?"

"A feller run off mit McSorley's grocery wagon. I wants to cotch him alretty!"

"Oh! and will yer give me dat dollar?"

"Yes. Here you are in advance."

And Nick handed the bill over.

The butcher boy waited to hear no more. He slammed the basket of meat into the saloon door, shouted to the barkeeper and was out to the curb all in two seconds.

"I saw the wagon," said he. "Jump in."

Over the uneven street they went, the cart jumping up and down so violently that Nick was compelled to keep hold of the seat for fear of being thrown out.

The butcher boy was a skillful driver.

and he found his way in and out of the mass of moving vehicles in a way that was marvelous.

"Can't none of 'em beat me driving around here," he grinned to Nick. "I'm trainin' fer de racetrack; see?"

As they passed several side streets Nick kept his eyes open for the grocery wagon. Suddenly he called a halt.

"What's that?" he questioned, and pointed down the thoroughfare leading to the East River.

"Dat's der wagon!" returned the butcher boy.

He turned into the side street, and on they went more rapidly than ever.

When they reached the turn-out, it was standing at the edge of a dock piled high with oil barrels. Nick sprang to the ground and ran to the front of the wagon. As he had surmised, it was empty.

Bauermann could not be far off, and Nick lost no time in running out upon the dock which seemed to be practically deserted.

The barrels of oil were piled in little heaps here and there, with numerous passages among them. Down one passage and up another ran Nick, while the butcher boy looked about for some place where he might tie his horse so he could help in the search.

At last the detective reached the very edge of the dock. Here was tied a rowboat, with oars on the seats.

"If Bauermann came out here it is more than likely he would take to that boat," he reasoned.

The dock was rotted in places, and there was a pile of lumber at hand showing that the dock builders were soon to repair the place.

To avoid breaking a leg in some hole, Nick moved around cautiously.

Suddenly something whizzed through the air over the detective's head.

He sprang to one side, and then something heavy hit him on the left shoulder.

It was a rough piece of iron, and the blow caused him to stumble.

Before he could recover, another bit of iron was hurled at him.

This landed on his neck, and over he went, dazed and half unconscious.

"Will follow me!" hissed Frederick Bauermann, from behind a near-by stack of oil barrels. "I'll show you that I am not any ordinary fellow to be captured.

"If I can escape the police of Berlin, London, Milwaukee and St. Louis, I fancy I can also escape the detectives of New York.

"You think you are smart, but I'll show you that I'm smarter."

Seeing Nick go down, he rushed forward and gave the detective a savage kick on the head.

This finished the work, and the detective lay motionless on the dock.

Bauermann had seen the row-boat, and now his eyes rested on it with great satisfaction.

"Just what I want to go up the river in!" he murmured to himself.

Then he looked at Nick and at the oil barrels lying about.

"I have a good mind to finish him!" he growled, savagely. "He knows too much about me and the friends I have left behind."

The dock was oil-soaked, and many of the barrels lying near were full.

A lighted match thrown almost anywhere would do the business.

To be sure, the fire might cost thousands of dollars in property, but for this Bauermann did not care a rap.

His one thought was to get rid of Nick Carter.

He examined the row-boat and cut the rope which bound it to the dock.

Then out came a silver match-case and a small match, one of the sort not blown out by the wind.

Scratch!

The match was all aflame.

Bauermann glanced about hurriedly.

Not over a yard from where Nick lay was some oil-soaked planking.

Full oil barrels were but a short distance away.

For a second the fiend held the match.

Then he cast it from him onto the planking.

There was a flash, and a rapidly running flame followed, leaping straight for the barrels of oil!

The match had done its deadly work, and in less than a minute the whole big dock would be ablaze!

With gigantic leaps, Bauermann gained the row boat.

In his haste to get away he nearly capsized the craft.

But he soon steadied her, and taking up the oars rowed out into the East River and up the stream as fast as his strong muscles would allow.

CHAPTER IV.

OUT OF A FIERY FURNACE.

It was not until long afterward that Nick Carter realized fully what had happened.

He lay on the dock motionless, his thinking powers all but a blank.

In a dim sort of way he saw a flash of fire.

He imagined he must be dreaming or else some one had again struck him on the head.

The fire came closer to him, but still he had not the power of motion to move out of its way.

Then he heard a shout, coming from the butcher boy.

The lad had run forward, seen the blaze

and retreated, yelling "Fire!" at the top of his hearty lungs.

All this took less than a minute.

Then of a sudden came a fearful explosion that, to Nick, appeared to rend heaven and

Several of the oil barrels had gone up, scattering the blazing oil in all directions.

The old dock shook from end to end, and then with a crash the center and the outer end went down.

Nick found his clothes full of oil and on fire.

Then he went up in the air, was whirled over and over, and went down and down into the cold water.

It was a narrow escape from a horrible death.

Had the dock not given away, he would have been literally roasted alive.

The plunge into the water not only saved him from fire, but also relieved him of much of the oil, and he revived sufficiently to realize his danger.

When he came up, he found himself in the midst of burning barrels and dock wreckage.

The oil was flowing over the water, carrying the fire in all directions.

Nick was a powerful swimmer, and as soon as he could get back a little of his breath, he began to move away from the danger.

He found it impossible to gain any of the other docks in the vicinity, for the oil floated along them, scattering the fire with the tide.

He accordingly swam for midstream, and when out several hundred feet, called to a tug for assistance.

The pilot on the tug saw him, and he was promptly hauled on board.

"You've had a narrow escape, my man."

"You are right."

"What set the dock on fire?"

"A man threw a lighted match down, I believe."

By this time the alarm had been given, and the engines and the fire tugs were hurrying to the scene. The novel conflagration also attracted a large crowd of sightseers.

But little could be done toward saving the stock and its contents, and the work of the fire department was confined to saving the property adjoining.

It was hard to keep the fire from spreading among the shipping, and before this could be stopped, four canal boats, coming up the river, were consumed.

Nick was well cared for on the tug, and throwing aside his German band suit, he bought from one of the tug hands a sailor's outfit, pants, shirt, cap and all.

But although he was treated well, the tug captain suspected him of being implicated in the fire matter, and when Nick was landed further down town, an officer was called.

The great detective willingly agreed to go to the station-house with the policeman, and they started at once.

But once at the precinct, instead of being locked up, Nick was closeted with the captain for ten minutes and then set free.

Three officers were sent with Nick to the house from which Bauermann had escaped.

They arrived in time to capture one of the anarchists and also get possession of Bauermann's valise, containing his clothing and a package of a dozen different kinds of fraudulent foreign bonds.

No money was found, and Nick rightfully conjectured that Bauermann carried his ill-gotten gains on his person.

"And so I am yet no farther than when I first started," he said to himself, grimly.

The man who had been captured was closely examined by Nick before he was taken to the station-house.

"What is your name?"

"Schmidt."

"Your first name?"

"Robert."

"Where are you from?"

"Vienna."

"How long have you been here?"

"You mean in New York?"

"In the country."

"Five years."

"How long have you known Frederick Bauermann?"

"I don't know him at all."

"Don't lie to me," exclaimed Nick, severely. "You have enough to answer for without getting deeper into trouble."

"I haven't done anything wrong," was the defiant answer. "You had no right to break into our rooms——"

"I am not speaking about that affair. I refer to that other little thing that you were mixed up in."

Nick knew of no other affair to the man's discredit, but the shot took effect.

"I—I wasn't to blame," stammered the man.

"The police know better. Perhaps you won't acknowledge that you left Vienna in a big hurry."

At this the man grew very pale. He imagined that his whole life was to be revealed.

"I—I——" he began.

"We know all about you. And we know your real name isn't Schmidt."

"It is."

"They didn't call you Schmidt in Vienna."

The man began to breathe quickly.

"Tell me your real name," commanded Nick, "or it will go hard with you."

"Rudolph Schwinn."

"Ah, that's better. Now how long have you known Bauermann? Tell the exact truth, or you won't get the chance after I have questioned your companions and Bauermann."

From this, Schwinn imagined that Bauermann and his two companions had been captured. His face grew even more disturbed than before.

"I know Bauermann about four months—since he come from St. Louis."

"Where did he live?"

"At the Bismarck House."

"Did you help him in his swindles?"

"No."

"Be careful now."

"I didn't help him. I only introduced him to Guswein."

"And you told him Guswein had money?"

"I said Guswein expected money from Germany."

"Didn't you tell Guswein those bonds were good things to buy?"

At this Schwinn winced.

"I might have said something like that. When I first met Bauermann, I thought he was an honest man."

"Was he a member of your society?"

"Yes, but he didn't take much interest."

"Too busy with his own little affairs, eh?"

"I guess so."

"Who were those other men? I mean, what are their real names?"

"Adolph Dingler and Max Herbert."

"Who is the principal member of your society?"

"Dingler."

"How many members have you?"

"About fifteen."

"Give me the names."

Schwinn did so, and Nick put them down, to hand the list to Superintendent Byrnes later, for the police keep a record of all members of such secret societies.

"Now about Bauermann. Where was he going next? Be very careful how you answer."

"I don't know."

"Didn't he mention any place at all?"

Schwinn thought for a moment.

"Will you be easy on me if I try to help you?"

"Yes."

"Well, then, I heard Bauermann asking Dingler what sort of a city Buffalo was."

"What did Dingler say?"

"He said it was a good fat city to pluck."

"And what after that?"

"Bauermann asked for particulars. He wanted to know where he could stop, and so on."

"Did Dingler mention any place?"

"Yes, the Holtzmundt Hotel. That is kept by a man from New York who formerly belonged to the society."

"Do you think Bauermann was getting ready to go to Buffalo?"

"Most likely. He was getting ready to go somewhere."

Nick continued to question Schwinn, and finally came to the conclusion that the fellow was speaking the truth.

Schwinn was taken to the station-house and a search instituted for Dingler and Herbert.

The latter was caught, but Dingler was not to be found.

After that Nick called at his office and had an interview with Chick.

"If you can do so without interfering too much with your other work, Chick," Nick said, "you had better run down this Dingler. His evidence may be of value to us."

"I'll do it, Nick. But where are you going?"

"To Buffalo."

"You think Bauermann has gone there?"

"I do."

"He may hear of Schwinn's capture and learn of his danger."

"I'll follow him up too quickly for that. I have an idea he has already sent some word to this Holtzmundt."

"I see."

"He has Guswein's four thousand dollars his possession, and that is what I am after. I want to reach him before he has a chance to drop any of it."

"Perhaps he has already dropped some in New York."

"If he has, Dingler no doubt has it, and you must bag the sum when you bag your game."

"I will," returned Chick, and then the two separated.

Nick's next movement was to attend to his wounds. They were soon doctored in the best manner possible, though some ugly swellings remained where he had been struck by the iron.

Nick fancied that for his purpose the disguise of a commercial traveler would be best, and he accordingly donned a light brown suit and got one of the regulation tips, which he plastered with express and other tags.

By consulting a time-table, he found he could get a train for Buffalo in half an hour. Another train had left an hour and a half before, and he felt pretty certain that, unless some accident had befallen him, Bauermann had taken this.

Of course, he knew nothing of the fact that the swindler had rowed up the river.

Bauermann had gone as far as the Harlem river, and here, being tired out, had landed near the railroad bridge.

He had been just too late to take the eleven o'clock train Nick calculated he would board.

"I will take the next," he said to himself. "And in the meanwhile I will hunt up some good disguise."

Strange to say, Bauermann also thought to travel as a drummer. He procured a suit not much different from that worn by Nick and likewise a big grip, in which he stowed away his old suit of clothing.

And thus it was that the train which left the metropolis that evening carried on board both pursued and pursuer.

CHAPTER V.

AN EXCITING TRIP ON THE BUFFALO EXPRESS.

Nick had a berth in the parlor car, but before going to bed, he wandered into the smoker to enjoy a fragrant Havana.

A fine imported cigar he considered one of the richest blessings on earth.

He settled himself back in a soft seat and here gave himself over to long puffs and deep reflection.

Presently Nick saw a man walk from the end of the car to where the water cooler stood.

The fellow got a small glass of water, poured a bit of brandy into it, and swallowed the potion with apparent relish.

Then he started to walk back to his seat.

As he did so, Nick cast a glance at him full of genuine surprise.

The man was Adolph Dingler, the principal member of the New York gang of anarchistic tendencies.

He caught Nick's glance, but failed to recognize the detective, and quietly passed on to his seat.

The appearance of Dingler set the detective to thinking.

"He has taken time by the forelock and skipped, just as Bauermann has done.

"No doubt he is also bound for Buffalo.

"Perhaps the two have arranged to meet at the Holtzmundt Hotel, and then he and Bauermann will strike up a regular partnership in this peculiar line of fraud.

"If that is so, I must be on hand to bag them both.

"It will do no good to arrest Dingler now. It will merely give Bauermann a better chance to escape.

"But I must not let this chap out of my sight for a single moment."

Dingler sat in a seat by himself.

He had been reading a German paper, but now he threw it aside, and got out a notebook and a pencil.

He began to figure rapidly, and as he did so, a smile of satisfaction shone on his smooth face.

Nick did not turn his head, yet by the aid of a small hand mirror, he took in everything that was done.

A quarter of an hour went by, and Dingler put up the notebook.

Just as he did so the door of the car opened and another man came in.

He looked around sharply as if he was on his guard.

Suddenly his eyes rested on Dingler, and he uttered a cry of astonishment and pleasure.

He went up to the man and tapped him on the shoulder.

Dingler started. But when the newcomer had whispered into his ear, he smiled and held out his hand.

The newcomer dropped into the seat and soon both men were conversing earnestly in German.

Nick was puzzled.

"Who is that man?" he asked himself. "Some other member of that gang?"

As the talk proceeded, Nick grew more and more suspicious.

There was that in this newcomer's appearance which seemed strangely familiar.

Suddenly a thought flashed into Nick's mind.

"If it isn't Bauermann, it's his double!"

Nick felt he could not be mistaken, in spite of the care the swindler had taken to disguise his identity.

Bauermann's face was covered with a heavy beard and mustache, but his actions

and gestures were not changed, and they gave him away.

To make sure he was not in error, Nick arose slowly and stretched himself.

Then he shook the cigar ashes from his clothes, and turning into the aisle, walked slowly toward the door.

He passed the pair and reached the door. He felt they were watching him—being suspicious of all the people on the train—and he opened the door and went out on the platform.

A few minutes later he looked through the glass, and when they were once more engrossed in conversation, noiselessly opened the door and re-entered the car.

Dingler and Bauermann sat in the next to the last seat of the car. Directly behind them was a seat turned the other way.

This seat was empty, as was also the seat opposite, and by crouching upon the cushions, the great detective was able to hear all that the two rascals said.

"And you say Holtzmundt will assist us?" Bauermann was asking, in German.

"Sure," returned Dingler, in the same language. "He is just the right sort."

"You see, some of those smart detectives from New York may follow us—especially as you are not in disguise."

"Yes, that was too bad. I must change my appearance in some way as soon as I can."

"That fellow who chased me on to the dock won't follow me any longer!" laughed Bauermann. "I guess he is done pretty brown by this time."

"Was there no chance for him to escape?"

"Not much! Why, the explosion came before I was away two minutes."

"Well, it was a good thing to get him out of the way."

"So I thought. But to come back to

Holtzmundt. He will give us a safe hiding-place?"

"No doubt of it."

"And he will help me to unload more of those Austrian bonds?"

"For a percentage, yes."

"I will give him the same as I promised you, twenty-five per cent."

"I know that he will do it for that."

"If we are sharp, we ought to get rid of ten thousand dollars' worth of the bonds," went on Bauermann, reflectively.

"That is so. But tell me, how did Guswein find out so quickly that the bonds are so good?"

"I don't know."

"He must have found out almost as soon as you handed them over."

"Most likely to make sure he took them to the consul's office."

"And he didn't lose any time in getting a detective, either."

"Oh, those hungry dogs are always standing around waiting for a job," growled Bauermann.

"That's a nice compliment," thought Nick, with a grim smile to himself. "Well one thing is certain, we won't stand around much longer on Bauermann's account."

The men continued to converse for about half an hour longer and then Dingler gave a yawn.

"About time to go to bed, ain't it?" he asked.

"I guess it is," returned his companion. "Have you a berth?"

"Yes."

"So have I. Come on."

But they got no farther, for just then there came a sudden interruption.

While this conversation had been taking place it had begun to rain and a thick mist had settled over the central valley of New York State, through which the train was moving in intense darkness.

The little town of Carlwell had just been passed when suddenly through the mist directly ahead loomed up the light of a rapidly swinging red lantern.

The engineer sprang with horror to reverse his lever and put on the steam brakes.

There was a shock, and the fire flew from the slipping wheels, but the heavy train continued to move on at the rate of forty miles an hour.

Fifty feet farther, and then both engineer and fireman saw the rear end of another train directly ahead!

"By heavens, Bill!" burst from the fireman's lips, and with a yell, he leaped from the cab.

The engineer set his teeth and remained at his post.

A fraction of time, so small it could not be counted, and then came a thump and a grinding crash, and then and there occurred that awful accident which to-day is remembered in many homes to which it brought death and sorrow.

The midnight express had run into the rear end of one of the locals.

Two cars of the front train were entirely demolished, and over a score of passengers were killed and seriously wounded.

The engine of the express suffered no further injury than that of being considerably battered about the front.

But the car directly behind the tender was thrown upward and to one side, and when it came down it was split from end to end.

This was the car in which Nick was listening to the conversation of the two crooks.

He felt himself thrown forward and then against the roof.

The woodwork beside him was splintered and some of the splinters he afterward found stuck in the fleshy part of his leg.

Then the car went over and Nick was

tumbled around in a dozen different ways in as many seconds.

He struck on his head, and for the moment was so bewildered and stunned that he could not move.

He lay motionless and mute, the cries of the other passengers ringing loudly in his ears.

All was in total darkness for several minutes, and pandemonium reigned supreme.

Passengers scrambled in all directions over the wreckage, some never hesitating to trample on others in their frantic efforts to get to a place of safety.

"Help! help!"

"I'm under the berth and can't get out!"

"Take that seat off of my chest, for the love of heaven!"

"Don't leave me, Tom! My leg is broken!"

"Oh, where is my little girl—my Katie?"

A hundred other cries rang out, appeals which touched the hearts of the most hardened.

And now a new danger began to threaten.

Those of the lamps which had not gone out had set fire to the woodwork and curtains.

Soon a bright flame shot skyward.

"The cars are burning up!"

"Those who can't get out will be burned to death!"

Suddenly Nick heard a voice that brought him more to his senses than did anything else.

"I am caught fast and the fire is coming this way! Get me out! Get me out!"

The person calling was Frederick Bauermann.

It seemed now as if there was a chance that the man who had left Nick Carter to be burned up on the oil dock was about to be consumed by the hungry flames himself.

CHAPTER VI.

A HOT CHASE IN BUFFALO.

As soon as he heard Bauermann's cry, Nick attempted to stand up.

He found this impossible, for the wreckage of the car roof was all about him.

His leg pained him not a little, but to that he paid no attention.

His one thought was to get out and to rescue Bauermann.

The man did not deserve to be saved, but Nick had not the heart to let him perish, not even had Bauermann been ten times more of a villain than he was.

"Where are you?" he called out.

"Here! here!" came from beneath one of the wooden shutters used to divide one berth from the next. "Save me, and I will give you a hundred dollars!"

Bauermann now showed what a real coward he was at heart.

His face was ghastly and his teeth chattered so he could scarcely speak.

Nick, at last succeeding in freeing himself, clambered over to the man and caught hold of the shutter.

It was not without much difficulty that he raised it. As soon as this was done the bond swindler struggled to his feet, not much hurt.

Another man was lying near—a man who was dying—but without hesitation, Bauermann stepped all over him in his haste to reach the open field beside the car tracks.

This brutality made Nick "mad clear through," as the saying goes.

"You brute!" he cried. "Look where you are stepping!"

"Let me out! let me out!" howled Bauermann. "See how everything is taking fire!"

"That is no reason why you should step on your fellow passengers."

Bauermann leaped forward. Nick could

easily have detained him, but the dying man called out piteously:

"Take me out, won't you? Don't leave me to be burned up!"

"Yes, I'll take you out," replied the great detective.

And with great care he raised the sufferer and hurried with him over the wreckage to the open field, where he made the man as comfortable as circumstances would permit.

"My Katie! My Katie! Won't some one save her?"

It was the voice of the mother who had cried out before.

The tears were streaming down her cheeks, and she was wringing her hands in bitter despair.

"Where is your child?" asked several.

"We were in the front end of the car! Over there!"

The men shook their heads. That part of the car was completely smashed and was now in flames.

"We can't do anything for you, madame. It ain't likely she's alive."

"Oh, don't say that! Don't!"

Much as Nick wanted to keep an eye on Bauermann and look for Dingler, he could not resist the mother's appeal.

With quick steps, the great detective hurried to the burning portion of the car.

Catching a car ax from the hands of a man who had just come up, he began knocking the burning brands right and left.

Soon he had a passage-way made, and through this he dashed and disappeared from the gaze of the other passengers.

"He won't come out alive!"

"It's a foolish undertaking!"

"Say, that's nerve, ain't it?"

A minute passed—two—and those outside shook their heads.

Then, when even the mother had almost given up, Nick reappeared.

His face was blackened, and his false beard and wig were much burned.

But on one arm he held a little girl of six or seven years!

She was unconscious, but subsequent investigation proved that she was not seriously hurt.

Then another shout went up—a shout for Nick Carter's bravery.

The joyful mother took her child from him and alternatively thanked Nick and kissed the motionless little face.

But there was no time to waste.

It was soon learned that every one who had been in the car was now out.

What had become of Dingler, the detective did not know.

Bauermann had also left the crowd.

The wreck ahead of the engine now demanded every one's attention.

Nick worked like a trooper, and assisted three more people who might otherwise have received lasting injuries.

At last the excitement was over.

Word was sent to the station ahead, and from there telegrams were sent for a hospital car and for the wrecking gang.

As soon as Nick saw that he was no longer needed, he went on a hunt for Bauermann and Dingler.

From another passenger he learned that the two men as described had started for a place called Garlwood on foot.

Nick started after them through the rain.

It was a disagreeable journey, but at last it was accomplished, and the detective found himself at the Garlwood station, where an excited crowd had gathered to learn the particulars of the great wreck.

In vain Nick sought his quarry.

Not a sign of them could be found.

Then Nick hunted up the night station-master.

"I want to talk to you," he said.

"Ain't got time," was the surly response.

"I will only take a minute."

"Ain't got time, I tell you."

"I am an officer."

"Oh!"

"I am looking for two criminals who were on one of the wrecked trains."

"Well?"

"I understand they came here?"

"What of it?"

"Did you see them?"

And Nick gave the station-master a brief description of Bauermann and Dingler.

"Yes, I saw them. They were the first men in town after the word of the wreck came."

"Where did they go?"

"Went on the engine to Buffalo."

"On what engine?"

"A special sent from here for the hospital car. We didn't know just where the car was and went to hunt it up."

"I see. And you are sure they boarded that engine?"

"Yes. I saw them make a deal with Tom Perry, the engineer."

"How long ago was this?"

"Thirty-five or forty minutes. Is that all you want to know? I am in a hurry."

"That is all."

"Those fellows have succeeded in getting a little start," said Nick to himself, as he turned away. "But since they are unsuspecting of being followed, I shall find the trail hot when I reach Buffalo."

He was able to reach the city by the lake early the next morning, and soon after the train rolled into the depot he inquired his way to Holtzmundt's Hotel.

He found the place down on one of the side streets, not far from the Erie Basin.

The neighborhood is anything but respectable here, and the hotel was crowded with boatmen and canal hands.

"Looking for a couple o' friends o' mine," said Nick to the clerk, and then began to examine the register.

He could find on its pages nothing which might be taken for entries by Dingler and Bauermann.

"Ain't come yet, I reckon," he went on to the clerk, and then he gave the fellow a description of the two men.

"Oh, they were here, looking for Mr. Holtzmundt," was the reply.

"They didn't stop, then?"

"No. Mr. Holtzmundt is out of town, and they said they would call again."

"How long ago was it since they left?"

"Not more than an hour."

Nick walked out of the hotel.

He was just sixty minutes behind his quarry.

"I ought to be able to trace them without much trouble," he reasoned, and after a number of inquiries, finally reached the conclusion that Bauermann and Dingler had made their way to some resort on Canal street.

Keeping his eyes wide open, though apparently careless of his surroundings, Nick walked slowly along this disreputable thoroughfare, till he found himself in front of a low dance hall.

From inside came the notes of an accordion and the scraping of a fiddle, and wild bursts of laughter mingled with the clinking of glasses.

A glance through the doors as a customer swung them open revealed Bauermann standing at the end of the bar.

Nick entered the resort, and coming up close to Bauermann, ordered a glass of beer.

Just as the beer was handed to Nick, the swindler passed back to a rear hall door with one of the bartenders.

Nick would have collared him then and there, but he wished to bag Bauermann and Dingler together.

Nick drank his beer and then shuffled to a seat in the rear and pretended to listen to the music.

At the first opportunity he slipped out of the saloon and into the hallway.

He felt certain Bauermann had gone upstairs.

The movements of the man seemed to indicate that he was growing suspicious.

"Perhaps he has received some word from New York," thought Nick.

The great detective had struck the truth.

Word had come, and now both Bauermann and Dingler were on their guard.

Dingler knew the keeper of the resort, and he had brought Bauermann there to talk over their future plans.

They were both disappointed not to meet Altmundt, and their fear of detectives made them give the hotel a wide berth.

Mounting the stairs silently, Nick felt his way through the dark hallway to the near-door.

He entered a room only to find it empty. No more rooms were tried with a like result.

Then Nick approached another apartment. The door was closed tightly, but from within came the murmur of voices, all talking in German.

Half a dozen men were in the room gambling.

"It's not likely Bauermann has joined that crowd," thought Nick.

Just at this moment the door of a room in the rear opened, and Bauermann and Dingler came out.

They started back on seeing Nick, and backing quickly into the room again, closed the door.

Nick ran in the direction and was in time to hear the key turned in the lock.

"Open that door!" he cried, sternly.

No attention was paid to this command,

and without hesitation the detective put his shoulder to the barrier and broke it down. The crash was followed by another, and Nick entered the room in time to see Bauermann and Dingler disappearing over the roof of a one-story addition to the rear of the house.

He followed through the smashed window, and a second later leaped into the little yard below, just as the men who were gambling came out to see what was up.

Scarcely had Nick touched the ground when an unexpected foe loomed up before him.

It was nothing more or less than an ugly-looking mastiff.

How Bauermann and Dingler had escaped the beast was a mystery, but there he was, standing ready to leap at Nick's throat.

The brute sprang upon Nick, and in self-defense the detective was compelled to fire at him.

The dog was game, however, and it took three bullets to dispatch him. In the struggle Nick had his left arm slightly lacerated.

By this time the barkeeper and others were on the scene.

"I'll fix you for killing that dog!" howled the barkeeper, as he struck at Nick with a club he carried.

His blow did not reach the mark, and he found himself on the flat of his back, while Nick disappeared through the saloon and into the street.

By this time the whole dance-house was in an uproar.

The report circulated that the police were about to raid the place, and the disreputable women within grew wild with alarm.

They ran in all directions, and the so-called respectable men who were present kept them company.

Nick was followed to the sidewalk, but here the gang left him. There was still

money on the gambling table up-stairs, and a number went back to secure it.

Once on the street, Nick looked up and down for Bauermann and Dingler, but found that the two had disappeared.

He asked half a dozen persons concerning them, but could get no satisfactory answers.

The two had made good use of the little time given them and skipped out.

"I'll have those fellows or break a leg," said Nick, as in a convenient alleyway he made several changes in his disguise, and then started a systematic search for his quarry.

At last he came to the conclusion that the two had gone to the lake front.

He hurried off in that direction, and soon reached the docks.

A crowd was hanging around, and he learned from one of them, a boatman who had seen the pair, that they had got aboard the *Jessie Harris*.

"What sort of craft is that?"

"She's a big lake tug."

"Where is she?"

"Just started up the lake."

CHAPTER VII.

A RACE ON LAKE ERIE.

Nick did not worry over this news.

"Where is the tug going?"

"Can't tell you that, boss."

"Was she loaded?"

"No."

"No tow either?"

"Nothing, boss."

"Where is the office she hails from?"

"Ain't no office. Captain Harris just runs her where he pleases. He's a shady cuss."

"In trouble with the police?"

"That's it. Some say he used to be a smuggler. One thing is certain, he ain't in favor over on the Canadian shore."

This was not pleasant news to the great detective.

He realized at once if this Captain Harris was what the man said, Bauermann and Dingler would have no trouble in making terms with him.

"Do you know how many hands he has aboard the tug?"

"Four."

"A tough crowd?"

"I reckon so. They have fights enough along the lake front."

Nick waited to learn no more.

Evidently Bauermann and Dingler had fallen in with friends, and if anything was to be done, it must be done quickly.

Before long the tug would be out of sight, and then to follow her would be almost impossible.

Captain Harris might land the two on the United States side or he might take them over to Canada.

On looking down the street, the great detective saw a sign which at once attracted his attention:

UNION TRANSPORTATION COMPANY.

Barges, Tugs and Small Boats for Charter.

He walked rapidly toward the office.

An elderly man was seated at the desk reading a copy of the *Buffalo News*.

"I want the fastest tug you have at once," said Nick.

The man dropped the paper and stared at him.

"What's that?"

Nick repeated his demand.

"At once? What do you mean? To-day?"

"At once—within two minutes if you can get her ready."

"You must be——" The man was going to say crazy, but he broke off. "What do you want the tug for?"

"I am a detective, I want to follow another

tug that has just left, and I don't want the men on board that I am after to get out of sight."

"I see. Well, you can have the Mary Hough."

"Is she as fast a tug as the Jessie Harris?" The man stared at Nick.

"So Captain Harris has got himself into trouble again, eh?"

"No, I am not after the captain. I am after two men who are with him."

"Yes, our tug is every bit as fast as Harris' boat."

"And how soon can you have her ready?" "That depends on what you are able to pay my friend."

"I'll pay the regular rate and ten dollars if you get her ready in ten minutes, fifty dollars if ready in five minutes, fifty dollars if ready in three minutes. You take me up? Here is my money."

And out came a big roll of bills.

Money talks and we'll hump ourselves, nigger. Here, Bill! Sam! Hank! get on board of the Mary Hough, and darn quick. The fire started?"

"Yes, sir," came from the back of the tug.

The crew had overheard the conversation and recorded.

"Putty low, though, Mr. Willetts."

Put some tar on the coal, then, and stir it up. You heard the officer. We git that done. Come on, stranger!"

The transportation man led the way down to a near-by dock and onto a natty-looking steam tug.

He flew down into the fire-room with the fireman and took a hand in starting up the fires.

He knew what he was doing. Soon the black tar smoke was belching forth from the smoke-stack.

In exactly three minutes by the watch the

steam was up in the gauge high enough to be of service.

"Here you are, Mr. Detective. Just three minutes."

"And here is your fifty," responded Nick. "I'll pay for the tug when we get back."

"How long do you want her?"

"Long enough to run down the Jessie Harris. Do you see that craft away out to the west?" Nick went on, to the captain of the tug.

"Yes."

"I believe that is the Jessie Harris. Anyway, she took that course. You must catch her."

"Say, I reckon I'll go along and enjoy the fun," said Willetts. "Maybe there will be some tall fighting, eh?"

"I hardly think so," said Nick. "But all hands had better be prepared, in case this Captain Harris grows ugly."

"Well, here are five hearty men at your service."

"Thanks."

In half a minute more the steam tug had left her dock and was running under full head for the open lake.

At first they passed numerous craft going up and down, but presently these were left behind and no craft remained ahead but that which they were pursuing.

The recent storm had cleared away, and the sun shone down brightly over the rippling water.

The Jessie Harris had gained over half a mile, and Willetts doubted if they would be able to catch her before well along in the afternoon.

So at present there was nothing to do but to wait.

Nick employed the time in looking over a newspaper, and his companions wondered at his cool way of taking things when they themselves were all excitement.

The day wore on; and at noon dinner was served from the rather scanty stores on board.

About three o'clock in the afternoon the captain of the tug came to report.

"The Jessie Harris is running over for the Canadian line."

"Well?"

"Can you do anything if she gets in Canadian water?"

"Well, if I can't arrest my men, I can, at least, follow them," replied Nick, dryly.

"That's so."

On they went until the darkness of evening began to creep upon them.

Soon land was sighted ahead.

"What place is that?" asked Nick.

"That is Port Colbourne."

"At the entrance to the Welland Canal?"

"Yes."

"Then the Jessie Harris is bound for Lake Ontario?"

"It looks like it."

"We must reach her before the harbor is gained."

"We'll do our best."

The steam was crowded on, and soon Nick saw that they were gaining on the tug ahead.

"More steam, captain!" he cried.

"I'll put on every pound I dare, sir."

The steam tug labored along, the engine groaning from the pressure.

Nick knew as well as did the others that they were in danger of blowing up.

But still they kept on, and at last the two tugs were not over two hundred feet apart.

Meanwhile those on the Jessie Harris had discovered long before that they were being followed.

Bauermann and Dingler knew that it was Nick who was after them.

They had interviewed Captain Harris, and had come to a highly satisfactory arrange-

ment with the old smuggler, who went into their scheme hand and glove.

"We must escape!" cried Bauermann, in nervous excitement. "Captain, remember that five hundred dollars!"

"We are in Canadian waters now," was the grim reply.

"Never mind, that detective means business," put in Dingler, "and we don't wait for him to catch up with us."

Steam was added, but not a foot could be gained. Every second saw the pursuing tug drawing closer.

"Look here, have you a cannon on board?" asked Bauermann, suddenly.

"We have a small piece, used in celebrations. But what would——"

"Let me see the cannon. I used to be a gunner in the Prussian army," went on Bauermann.

The cannon was stowed away forward but was soon brought out.

It was indeed a small piece, but in a good state of preservation.

"Any powder?"

"Yes. But look here——"

"Give me the powder and a ball, to show you have it."

"Not a shot on board."

"Then give me a few bits of chain. That will do even better, perhaps."

The captain demurred, but all to no purpose. Bauermann and Dingler meant to have the cannon, and they carried their point.

The piece was rolled to the stern and loaded by Bauermann himself.

Then he sighted the cannon, and at the proper moment touched it off.

Bang!

The report was tremendous, and the result of the shot very disastrous.

The two tugs were not over a hundred and thirty feet apart when the shot was fired.

The bits of chain flew in all directions.

One tore a hole in the tug's bow and another ripped away half of the smokestack.

Still another bit of the chain whizzed uncomfortably close to Nick's head.

One of the tug hands received a flesh wound in the leg, and the Mary Hough was stopped, that the damage to the bow and to the smokestack might be investigated.

The Jessie Harris kept on at full speed, and in five minutes more had reached Port Colbourne and disappeared in the midst of the numerous craft at anchor there.

Nick was much chagrined by what had occurred. He took a long range shot at Bauermann, with his revolver, and had the satisfaction of seeing the swindler drop to the deck with a wound in his side, how serious he could not tell.

The damage to the Mary Hough was found to be considerable, and she had to lay by for repairs, which would take at least an hour, probably longer.

"I can't wait," said Nick to the captain.

"There ain't nothing else to do."

"How far is it to the landing?"

"About a mile."

"Can't you let a couple of the men row me there in the small boat?"

"I wouldn't dare to let the small boat go just now. The tug might take a notion to go to the bottom. Maybe we can signal a passing boat to help us and you, too."

So Nick had to be content to remain on board till another steam craft came up to them, much to their relief.

It was a Canadian revenue cutter.

The officer in charge wanted to know what the shot that had been fired meant.

"It means we got a setback," smiled Nick, and then he told the officer his story.

"I want to catch those fellows," he concluded. "Can you take me in?"

"Certainly, Mr. Carter."

The officer had often heard of Nick, and

he deemed it an honor to be of service to so distinguished a detective from the States.

But certain formalities had to be gone through with concerning the Mary Hough and her crew, and all this took time.

When Port Colbourne was reached it was night.

What had become of the Jessie Harris could not be learned at once.

But Nick set off on a still hunt and before morning discovered that the steam tug had slipped out into the lake again.

Now, the question was, were Bauermann and Dingler still on board?

"I'll find that out before I make a move to follow the tug," said Nick to himself.

And then he set to work with unusual care to discover what had become of the two adroit swindlers.

CHAPTER VIII.

NICK CARTER'S NERVE.

"Go on and set 'em up ag'in, Bobsy!"

"Don't be mean, Bobsy, while yer got the cash!"

"Gin and hot Scotch, Bobsy!"

The scene was in a low groggery along the shipping at Port Colbourne.

The place was filled with lake men and canalers, a tough gang if ever there was one.

In the midst of the crowd was a tall, lank youth, with a flushed face and restless eyes.

He had treated the crowd once, and now they wanted him to do so again.

"Not to-night, boys," he said, faintly.

"Oh, go on with yer!"

"Another round, Bobsy, fer yer health!"

"I say not to-night," replied the youth, just a trifle sharply. "I must take my money home and pay the rent."

"Let the landlord whistle, Bobsy, and be happy. A gin, Pete, on Bobsy's account."

"I won't pay for it, Pete," returned the youth to the bartender. "No more to-night."

And the youth started for the door.

But the crowd did not intend that he should escape them thus easily.

They knew he had nearly thirty dollars on his person, and they wanted him to spend every cent for drink.

It was nothing to them that this lank sailor lad from upper New York State had a wife and a baby at home who needed that money.

He could go when the cash was spent, and not before.

Two of the crowd sprang forward and stood between the youth and the swinging doors.

"Yer don't go afore we have that round, Bobsy!"

"Order it ter onct, Bobsy!"

"I won't, I tell you!" The youth's eyes began to flash angrily. "I have done more than my share already. Now let me go!"

"Hear him! Done enough, an' him just paid off from the Jessie Harris!" howled one man in the crowd.

"I wasn't paid off in full. I didn't get half what was due me."

"That's a lie to get out of treating!"

The speaker had hardly uttered the words than the lank youth, aroused by the insult, hit him a smart blow on the cheek.

The man staggered back in astonishment, but it did not take him long to recover.

"Are you goin' ter allow that, mates?" he howled, hoarsely.

"No, we ain't, Peterson! Mash him an' we'll stand by yer!"

"Who is he, anyway, ter come in here?"

"Easy ter see he's from the States!"

"States or not, he's got ter do the right thing!"

"That's so, Klipper!"

Run him inter the back room, boys!"

"And lock the front doors, too!"

"That's the talk! No police in this!"

"Easy there!" came in a whisper from the barkeeper.

"Money in this, Pete, fer you!" was the reply.

"Easy, anyhow. See that stranger in the corner?"

"Yes, but he's drunk and asleep."

Evidently the crowd was of one mind as to what to do.

Rather than let the lank youth go, they meant to drag him into the back room and rob him.

Such robberies had occurred before in the place, and the members of the crowd were, therefore, not afraid of one another.

But the barkeeper was afraid of the drunken man who sat at a table in the corner.

He had come in immediately after the lank youth, and after getting a drink of whisky, had settled himself to doze at the table.

The treating and loud talking had failed to arouse him.

He was a tough-looking customer, and no one had cared to find out where he came from.

The lank youth began to fight desperately, but in the hands of that gang he was all but powerless.

The front doors were locked, and then even the brutal-looking bartender took a hand in downing him who had but a few minutes before patronized him to the extent of a dollar and a half.

The lank youth was knocked down, and the crowd fell upon him like a pack of wolves.

"Give me his money bag!"

"Divide up square, dare, Forthinstone!"

"Give me a share of dat plunder."

"Let my money alone!" gasped the lank youth.

And he struggled valiantly to guard the precious bag.

In the meantime, unknown to the gang, the drunken man at the corner table had glided to the front doors and thrown them open.

Then with one gigantic leap, he sprang into the midst of the crowd.

First his right arm shot out and then his left.

They were sledge-hammer blows he dealt, and two men went down as though shot.

"Hi! wot's dis!"

"It's der drunken bloke!"

"Ow-ow!"

Again those fists of iron swung forth, and two more of the gang sought the sanded floor.

By this time the lank youth realized that he had a friend at hand whose fighting powers were not to be despised.

"That's right! Help me!"

"'Course I will, my—hic—friend!" hic-coughed the stranger. "This just suits Paddy Sullivan, the champion middle-weight of New York, even if he is a—hic—bit boozy!"

"A prize-fighter! A prize-fighter!" came in a chorus.

"Look out fer him, boys! he's a terror!"

But it was too late to look out.

Down went another tough, and then the rest fell over themselves in their frantic effort to get out of reach of those telling blows.

"Skip out!" whispered the supposed prize-fighter to the lank youth. "They may get to shooting soon."

The lank sailor needed no second warning. With his money bag still safe in his grasp, he leaped for the front doors and soon disappeared out upon the crooked and dirty street.

His pugilistic friend followed him, and

when both had covered several squares, the latter caught the sailor by the arm.

"We have run far enough," he said.

"Now come with me."

"To where?"

"Over to the Lord Grasmere House. We will be safe there."

"Are you stopping at the Lord Grasmere?" asked the lank sailor, in astonishment.

"Yes. Now come on."

With his hand still on the lank youth's arm, the speaker led the way to a well-lighted thoroughfare.

Upon a near corner stood the hotel that had been mentioned.

Nick—for the so-styled pugilist was no one else—led the way inside and up to an elegant room on the second floor.

The sailor was still more astonished.

"See here," he faltered. "You did me a good turn, but what is your game now?"

"You will soon see. Come in."

And motioning the sailor to a seat he locked the door.

Then he removed his tattered coat and his wig and false beard, and washed his hands and face at the marble bowl in the corner.

The sailor eyed him narrowly.

"Say, I know what you are," he said, finally.

"What am I?"

"A detective."

"You have struck it, my young friend."

"But what brings you after me? I ain't done anything."

The lank youth tried to speak boldly, but his voice trembled.

"I think you have done a great deal."

"Ain't done nothing, I say."

"You were on the Jessie Harris."

The young sailor grew pale.

"Well, what if I was?"

"You assisted two United States swindlers to escape."

"I didn't. I didn't know they were swindlers until we left Buffalo."

"But you found out soon afterward?"

"I did—by accident."

"It was all the same—you aided them to escape, and helped fire on the Mary Hough."

"I did, I'll admit it! But I am an honest man!"

"What is your name?"

"Bob Blatchford."

"Where do you come from?"

"Oswego."

"How long have you sailed with Captain Harris?"

"That was my first trip, and it will be my last."

"Can you prove it was your first trip?"

"Yes. I worked for him just a month and a half, around Buffalo, until we started out in such a hurry."

"And you didn't know those two men he took on board were criminals?"

"I did not."

"Did the other men know?"

"I can't say as to that. Of course, Captain Harris knew. They offered him a big stake to take them away."

"How about that cannon shot?"

"That was the work of the two men. Even the captain didn't want to fire on the other tug."

"Where is the Jessie Harris now?"

"Steamed off for Detroit."

"Are those two men on board?"

Bob Blatchford hesitated before replying.

"Look here," he said, at last. "I am honest, and I don't want to get into trouble."

"Well?"

"I was dragged into this muss."

"I am inclined to believe you."

"I don't want to be locked up or anything

like that. If I tell you all I know, will you see me through all right? I can furnish a good character for the last twelve years, all the time I've been on the lakes."

"Yes, I'll see you through, Blatchford."

"Well, then, those two men are going to Toronto."

"You are certain?"

"Yes; I overheard them talking about it on the quiet before they left the tug."

"Are they going there at once?"

"I think not. They are going to lay low up around the Welland Canal for a few days. But the one man, Dingler, has a friend in Toronto, and they are going to his place."

"What is the friend's name?"

"I didn't catch it, but he keeps race horses and has a mare called Queen Bess."

"Is that all you know?"

"Yes."

"Was Captain Harris paid off?"

"Yes. If he hadn't been, I wouldn't have got a cent out of him."

"How is it he let you go when you knew so much?"

"He couldn't help himself. I said I wouldn't stay without my pay, and when I got it I skipped."

Nick talked with Blatchford for half an hour longer, and at last came to the conclusion that the young sailor was telling the truth.

"If I let you go now, where will you go?" he asked.

"Take the first boat I can get back to Buffalo."

"All right; you may go."

Half an hour later found Nick preparing to leave for Toronto.

Previous to his departure he sent a message to the office in New York.

Nick fancied Chick would still be after the gang of which Dingler was the leader.

Consequently he telegraphed to Wick,

directing that young assistant to go at once to Detroit and watch for Captain Harris. In the meantime Patsy was to attend to any new matter that came in.

This accomplished, Nick took his departure for the great Canadian city on the upper shore of Lake Ontario.

He was now resolved, come what might, to round up Bauermann and Dingler in short order.

CHAPTER IX.

RUN DOWN IN TORONTO.

Nick's first work on arriving in Toronto was to learn what racing man owned the mare, Queen Bess.

This was an easy matter. At a little cigar store on the main street he fell in with a sporting fellow who gave him all the information desired.

"Queen Bess belongs to Otto Brandt," said the sport. "And she is a goer—or would be, if Brandt was not so all-fired tricky."

"What do you mean by tricky?" asked Nick.

"He won't let the mare win sometimes. He's got a jockey named Clossy, and the two work together like a charm. Sometimes Brandt makes a darn sight more by losing a race than he would by winning; see?"

Of course Nick saw, but he pretended to be quite ignorant. However, he asked where Brandt lived.

"Up on the old mill road, about two miles from here. He keeps a sort of stock farm for his flyers."

"Is he in town now?"

"I reckon so; I saw him only yesterday."

"Is he a married man?"

"No, he keeps bachelor's hall."

"Thanks."

It was late in the afternoon, and it had begun to rain. Nick buttoned up his coat

tightly, and, after getting full directions, set off for the racing man's residence.

He found an old-fashioned place, built of stone and covered with ivy. It stood in the midst of a grove of cedar trees with a high hedge hiding it from the road. In the rear was the stock farm, with several stables and other outbuildings.

While Nick stood near the main gateway to the place, a carriage came dashing up the roadway.

It passed but a few feet away from the detective, permitting him to get a good view of the occupants.

Four men were in the carriage.

Nick recognized Bauermann and Dingler. The others were utter strangers to him.

The face of one of the strangers appeared to be full of misery and despair. The other stranger was smiling sardonically.

"Hullo, some new game is up, that's certain," said Nick to himself. "Hang me if I think that one man likes the company he is in."

"I am half inclined to think he is with that crowd against his will."

The carriage turned in at the gateway and rolled up to the side entrance of the great stone house.

Three of the men got out and then lifted out the fourth.

Sure enough, the fellow's hands and feet were bound.

In a few seconds the three other men had their prisoner behind closed doors.

The carriage was driven back to one of the stables, and the big garden became deserted again.

Nick was about to make his way into the garden among the cedars when he heard a man approaching.

The fellow was dressed like a Canadian farmer, and carried a large market basket on his arm, filled with watercresses.

"Good-day," he said, respectfully. "Is this Mr. Otto Brandt's house?"

Nick smiled to himself.

"It is," he replied. "But what do you want here?"

"I thought he might want some cresses. I am a poor man and——"

"He won't want no cresses," growled Nick, still smiling.

The man who looked like a Canadian farmer hesitated.

Then Nick slapped him on the shoulder.

"You are a long way from home, my friend."

"Nick!"

"Yes, Chick," laughed the great detective. "How in thunder did you get up here?"

"I ran those fellows down in New York," replied the assistant.

"Well?"

"And from one of them I learned that Otto Brandt was in their game. He is an anarchist and a firm friend of Dingler. And then I followed up matters and learned that Dingler and Bauermann had gone off together, and that brought me up here. Am I on the right trail?"

"You are. That carriage that you saw just enter contained Bauermann, Dingler, another man who must have been Brandt, and a fourth individual who was under guard."

"A prisoner?"

"Exactly. Something is up, and whatever the game is, we must stop it and capture the two men we are after."

"They tell me this Otto Brandt is a desperate fellow."

"The three of them are desperate, Chick. But we can handle them. Come on."

Aided by the gathering darkness, they easily gained the south side of the big stone house

All the windows of the first story were tightly closed and locked.

"Brandt is taking no chances," whispered Chick.

"There is a window open on the second story," replied Nick, pointing in the direction. "We can make that all right from the roof of this bay-window."

No sooner said than done, and Nick was soon peering through the window and saw an empty room beyond.

"Come on!" he called to Chick, and the assistant at once obeyed.

As Chick entered the room, Nick motioned him to silence and pointed downward.

Then he opened the hall door and glided out and down the carpeted stairs, with Chick close at his heels.

A murmur of voices came from an apartment in the right wing of the mansion.

They soon gained the door, and Nick peered through the key-hole, and was not surprised to see the four men who had come in the coach were inside.

The prisoner was bound to a chair. His features looked even more miserable than before.

"Don't kill me, Brandt!" he cried, in a hollow tone.

"Shut up your whining, Nason!" growled the owner of the place. "You deserve death."

"No, I don't!"

"Didn't you try to give me away at the races day before yesterday?"

The prisoner shivered.

"You came within an ace of ruining me."

To this the prisoner did not reply.

"I don't forget those things," went on Brandt, harshly.

"That's right," put in Bauermann.

"Stand up for your rights."

"Otto will do that quick enough," laughed Dingler. "I know him of old."

Brandt winked.

"I can trust you, Dingler," he said. "But how about your friend?"

"You can trust him, too," replied Dingler, promptly. "He is about as deep in his work as you are in yours."

"Then we are three of a kind, as the saying goes, eh?"

"That's it."

"But you haven't told me what brought you up here?"

"We'll do that after you are done with Nason."

"I've a good mind to do him!" hissed Brandt. "He got me in trouble and made me drop six thousand dollars."

"Suit yourself," said Bauermann, with a shrug of his shoulders.

"Yes, go ahead, we won't squeal," added Dingler.

"Mercy! mercy!" shrieked the wretch in the chair.

"Hold your tongue!" commanded Brandt. "I'll take him below," he went on to his companions.

"Below?"

"Yes. I have a nice little chamber of horrors down in the cellar to which I introduce people who try to thwart me."

"I see. Well, go ahead, we'll wait for you here," replied Bauermann, reaching for a box on a desk and lighting a cigar.

Picking up the bound man, Brandt threw him over his shoulder.

Opening a door on the other side of the room, a flight of stone steps was revealed, and down these he went with his victim struggling in vain to free himself.

"Going to finish him?" called out Dingler.

"Not just yet. I will leave him down here till to-morrow, when I have a few questions to ask him. I'll be back in five minutes."

And thus speaking, Brandt disappeared with his victim.

"Time for us to act!" whispered Nick to Chick.

"You take Dingler, and I'll look out for Bauermann."

Thus speaking, Nick threw open the door of the room and strode in.

"Up with your hands!" he said to Bauermann, sternly.

The bond swindler sprang to his feet in consternation, while the cigar dropped from his opened lips to the carpet.

"Who—what——" he began. "What, the New York detective?" he shrieked.

"Exactly, Bauermann, and the game is up."

"And it is also for you, Dingler," added Chick.

"The devil take the luck!" roared Bauermann.

"We are caught like rats in a trap!" howled his companion.

"Caught? Never!"

With a wild leap, Bauermann threw himself upon Nick, and seeing this, Dingler rushed at Chick.

But the contest, fierce as it was, was of short duration.

Chick fired at Dingler, and the ball entered the man's knee, bringing him at once to terms.

Nick had no time to use his pistol, but he struck Bauermann in the jaw with his fist, and over went the swindler like a ten-pin, and in exactly five seconds the man was handcuffed.

In the meanwhile Chick slipped the brace-let upon Dingler, whose leg was broken, fastening him back to back with Bauermann.

"Watch them, Chick. I'll go after Brandt," said Nick.

And down he went into the regions below.

He met Brandt returning from a stone cell in which Nason had been locked. The villain was taken unawares and soon subdued.

But little more remains to be told.

Nason was at once released, and he offered to go at once for the Toronto authorities.

An hour later Bauermann, Dingler and Brandt were taken to the local jail.

Brandt was soon after tried and sentenced to prison for five years.

Bauermann and Dingler were brought back to the United States as soon as the extradition papers could be obtained. Both are now suffering long terms of imprisonment.

Captain Harris was caught in Detroit, and

he, too, was made to suffer the full penalty of his misdeeds.

Carl Guswein was much astonished to learn that his Austrian bonds were worthless. He thanked Nick over and over again for the service rendered in securing the return of most of the money paid for the bonds, which Bauermann was forced to disgorge, and the great detective has never had any cause to regret the work done for a friend.

THE END.

The next number will contain "The Wizard of the Cue; or, Nick Carter and the Pool Room Case."

Nick Carter Weekly

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